

Shaping Riverside and the Future of Housing

(Tell Us What Matters Most to You!)



Neighborhood Conference Workshops ***Cal Baptist University – May 31, 2008***

At the May 31, 2008, Neighborhood Conference held at Cal Baptist University, the City conducted two identical afternoon workshops entitled “Shaping Riverside and the Future of Housing (Tell us What Matters Most to You!)” A Power Point presentation by the City Planning and Housing staff provided an overview of the following:

- What is a Housing Chapter (Element) of a General Plan?
- What is the process for updating the Housing Element as mandated by State Law?
- Housing programs currently provided by the City, and examples of City housing projects?

The overview was followed by an open discussion forum where residents (members of the public) were provided the opportunity to give their input on housing by answering the following question:

“If you had five minutes to sit down and talk with the Mayor and the City Council, what would you say are the three best ways to:

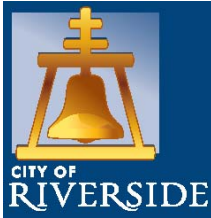
- *Improve housing opportunities Citywide?*
- *Improve housing opportunities in your neighborhood?”*

Community Development Department – Planning Division
General Plan Housing Element Update

Contact Information:

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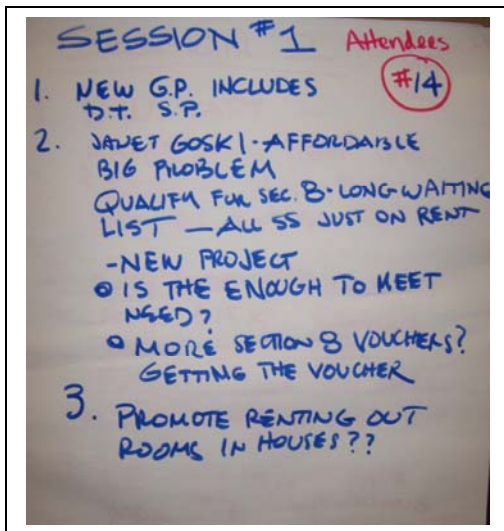
Email: housing-element@riversideca.gov



May 31, 2008 Neighborhood Conference

Shaping Riverside & the Future of Housing – SESSION #1

There were **14 people** who attended Session #1, the first of the two workshop sessions. Those who attended provided the input to the above question as follows:



- 1) Does the new General Plan include the Downtown Specific Plan? The City staff responded to this question by stating that it does.
- 2) I work at the Janet Goeske Center and see affordability as a big problem because:
 - a. There is a long waiting list to qualify for getting Section 8 vouchers.
 - b. People are paying all of their Social Security just on rent.
 - c. Are there enough Section 8 vouchers to meet needs? Should there be more Section 8 vouchers?
- 3) I would say that the City should promote renting out rooms in houses?
- 4) I would ask for consistency. The City's actions do not seem to be consistent with General Plans, Title 20, etc... The City seems to be able to do whatever they want and is not held to the same standard as citizens (i.e. a double-standard) when it comes to historic preservation. For example Fox Plaza.
- 5) I have noticed boarded up home sites at Heritage Square.
 - a. The City needs to act and not just land bank properties.
 - b. Buying up lots and not having a project to build does not help improve neighborhoods.
- 6) I would ask that the City make apartment managers enforce laws and rules including the Crime Free Multi-Housing program.
- 7) I want to know why there are so many empty lots on University Avenue? I think the City should provide more homeownership opportunities.

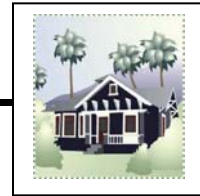
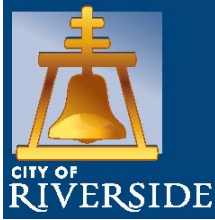
- 8) I think Citywide the City needs to further integrate public transportation with housing.
- 9) I think on a neighborhood level, the City should promote more Green Building including:
 - c. More energy and water efficient features through neighborhood assistance and retrofits.
 - d. Promote more sustainable landscaping.
- 10) Noise and other related nuisances are a problem within existing multiple-family residential housing complexes. More needs to be done to deal with this issue.
- 11) I think high density/high rise housing development, like Fox Plaza proposed to be located Downtown, should go elsewhere because it is obtrusive and dwarfs historic buildings Downtown.
- 12) I think it is absolutely vital to be a community of neighborhoods, know your neighbors, and have a sense of neighborhood. I also believe that there should be a packet of information about the City made available to new homeowners.
- 13) In the La Sierra area, new communities/residential developments such as Riverwalk are insular and not tied into the rest of the community.
- 14) To add to comment No. 13 above regarding providing information to new homeowners, there used to be a "Welcome Wagon" for new homeowners/newcomers to the City.

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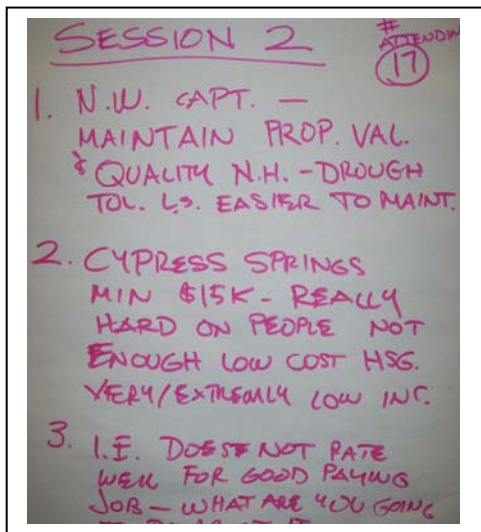
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May 31, 2008 Neighborhood Conference

Shaping Riverside & the Future of Housing – SESSION #2

There were **17 people** who attended Session #2, the second of the two workshop sessions. Those who attended provided the input to the above question as follows:



- 1) As a Neighborhood Watch Captain, I am concerned with:
 - a. Maintaining property values,
 - b. the quality of new housing, and
 - c. I suggest drought tolerant landscaping, which is easier to maintain.
- 2) I want to say that the Cypress Springs Apartment project has a minimum \$15,000 annual income requirement to qualify. This is really hard on some people who do not meet the minimum income level. As a result there is not enough low cost housing for very and extremely low income.
- 3) I want to say that the Inland Empire does not rate well for good paying jobs. What is the City going to do about it?
- 4) I think we need well paying jobs here.
- 5) I think there should be a City Ordinance/Resolution against eminent domain, especially for single-family homes. Homeowners within several blocks within the Eastside have been aggressively approached to sell their single-family homes. There was discussion/question about whether the City could use eminent domain to acquire single-family homes through eminent domain. City staff responded by stating that the City Council's policy is to not use eminent domain to acquire single-family homes.
- 6) I am concerned about helicopters flying overhead, and I don't know what they are looking at. I want privacy and I do not want the City looking at my property to take my property.

- 7) I am concerned about historical preservation and do not want to see historical neighborhoods targeted for tear down.
- 8) I want to say that access to the First Time Homebuyer Program is difficult and we need more access to programs. The City's Housing Program Manager indicated that the City is working on changing this, to make it more accessible soon. There is going to be 6,000,000 available and there will be a big announcement on July 1st.
- 9) I cannot afford to stay in my apartment due to rising rent and cutback on work hours. Therefore, I am going to move in with my daughter.
- 10) I want to say that some people on Social Security are paying \$250-\$300 a month on rent but renters are being shoved out through eminent domain.
- 11) I am for voluntary associations, private citizens, & families working together instead of depending so much on government. We should be careful about how much we depend on government.
- 12) In response to #11 above, I think we should be able to expect the City to provide for certain services.
- 13) I think the City should provide allocation of open space for parks.
- 14) I want to talk about Medicare cost and in defense of government programs Medicare is the best healthcare product we have.
- 15) Low income housing is not staying low income. After 6 months, my rent was raised. There is no rent control.
- 16) I think the City should keep multi-family high rise housing away from freeways.
- 17) I think the City should build smaller homes that are more affordable.
- 18) I think there should be more small cottages for the single elderly. The City should encourage smaller homes since there is a lot of wasted space in big homes.
- 19) I would like to say in regards to density:
 - a. Density is a knee-jerk reaction to growing population.
 - b. Are we going to wind up with run down housing that we want to tear down in the future?
 - c. I think people will feel closed in with high rise lofts
- 20) When I moved to Riverside, I wanted open space and to see stars.
- 21) I think privacy is an issue with houses so close—privacy is mandatory.
- 22) I want to say Riverside looks a lot better than it did in the past. The City has brought quality and class.

- 23) I think with housing and growth the environmental impact is huge and should be carefully considered including impacts like:
- a. Traffic
 - b. Parking
 - c. Public Transportation
 - d. Air Quality

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